CIDA's Activities in support of Human Rights and Democratization 1996-1997

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The Government regards respect for human rights not only as a fundamental value, but also as a crucial element in the development of stable, democratic and prosperous societies at peace with one another.

(Canada in the World, February, 1995)

Canadian International Development Agency   Agence canadienne de développement international

Introduction

- International assistance, delivered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), is a vital instrument of Canada's foreign policy. It promotes prosperity and employment, protects our security within a stable global framework, and projects the Canadian values of democracy and the rule of law, and culture.

- The development assistance program is one of the means through which the Government of Canada pursues its foreign policy objectives. CIDA's initiatives complement the bilateral and multilateral diplomacy of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the two departments work in close coordination to advance the objectives outlined in the foreign policy statement **Canada in the World** (February, 1995). The Government of Canada's policy for CIDA on human rights, democracy and good governance is situated within this policy framework.

- Respect for human rights, democratization and good governance creates the framework of society within which the development efforts of people, whether working as individuals, as groups in civil society, or through their governments, can be effective.

- *Human rights* are founded on the inherent dignity of the human person. As the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948, states, "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights."

- *Democratization* builds the effective participation of individuals in decision-making and the effective exercise of power in society, both through the formal processes of democracy, and through the organizations of civil society that give voice to popular concerns.

- These issues are integral to CIDA's mandate to support sustainable development in order to reduce poverty and to contribute to a more secure, equitable and prosperous world.

Background

- During 1996/97 CIDA increased the level of effort devoted to human rights and democracy (HR/D) in Canada's development assistance program. The agency adopted a more holistic approach to HR/D programming, coordinating its work more closely with its Canadian partners, other government departments and other donors.

Highlights of the year:

- New commitments to 256 HR/D projects valued at $61 million by CIDA bilateral program branches; and

- Disbursements to 427 active HR/D projects totaling $62.3 million* on the part of seven CIDA branches, an increase of 32.2 % since 1995/96.

* *This figure does not reflect the full extent of CIDA support. It does not include initiatives that relate to good governance or the promotion of economic, social and cultural rights. Nor does it include initiatives that address HR/D indirectly. Also not counted is CIDA's multi-year support for the overall programs of particular NGOs, institutions and international organizations which may include work in support of HR/D.*

HR/D Activities

Disbursements by Branches

- Seven CIDA program branches disbursed $62.3 million to support HR/D activities during 1996/97:

Millions of dollars

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Africa and Middle East					
Americas and Caribbean					
Asia and Pacific					
Central and Eastern Europe					
Canadian Partnership					
Multilateral Programs					
Communications					
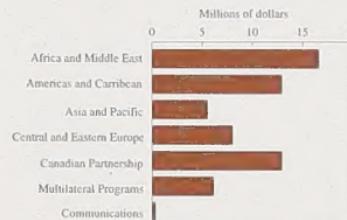
- Activities increased substantially in Central and Eastern Europe, rising from 6.3% in 1995/96 to 12.8% in 1996/97, and from 4.6% to 8.8% for Asia. Activities in Multilateral Programs decreased sharply from 22.5% to 9.7%.

- The Canada Fund, administered at Canadian embassies and high commissions around the world, remained a very important channel for responding to short term needs and accounted for 6.8% of CIDA's bilateral HR/D disbursements.

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Disbursements by Theme

- CIDA supported HR/D activities that were priorities for partner organizations and governments*, and for Canada in 1996/97. $62.3 million was disbursed as follows:

- *Democratic process:* $13.7 million (22.0%) supported the strengthening of the democratic process, including elections initiatives, support for electoral bodies and building democratic awareness.

- *Rule of law:* $6.8 million (10.8%) supported initiatives to build the rule of law, including strengthening the judiciary, police and prison official training, and widening access to the law.

- *Strengthening human rights institutions:* $1.3 million (2.2%) supported the strengthening of human rights commissions and ombuds offices.

- *Strengthening civil society:* $8.0 million (12.8%) assisted the strengthening of civil society, including empowering and building the human rights awareness of disadvantaged groups, and building the advocacy role of civil society organizations.

- *Conflict resolution and peace:* $1.4 million (2.3%) supported initiatives to resolve conflict and strengthen dialogue processes.

- *Media development:* $1.7 million (2.7%) supported initiatives to build the role of an independent, professional media in a democratic society.

- *Building human rights awareness:* $1.6 million (2.5 %) supported initiatives to raise human rights awareness in the general population and also among specialized target groups.

- *Multi-thematic programs:* $28.4 million (45.1%) supported geographic thematic funds, programmes funded through the Canadian Partnership Branch and the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

HR/D Activity Examples

- In each region of the world, countries receiving CIDA's HR/D support were those which had pressing needs and were priorities for the Canadian government in 1996/97. Many were in the midst of transition from conflict to peace and to more democratic forms of government. Examples of such countries in transition during 1996/97 included Bosnia (7.1% of total HR/D disbursements), Haiti (6.7%), Rwanda (6.2%), El Salvador (5.8%), South Africa (3.5%) and Guatemala (3.2%).

- While CIDA has continued to respond to urgent situations, the emphasis of its HR/D work has been shifting to longer term, strategic approaches.

- $1 million was contributed to a Constitutional and Legal Development Project in **South Africa** to help reinforce the country's Charter of Fundamental Rights. This project was intended to strengthen South Africa's civil society (including human rights organizations), and legal organizations and practitioners to play a central role in building a culture of rights through the forum of the courts.

- $1 million was contributed to a **Southeast Asia** Fund for Institutional and Legal Development (SEAFILD) to help increase the capacity of national and regional institutions in South East Asia to work effectively in the areas of governance, the promotion and protection of human rights, the rule of law and the development of civil society.

- $1.7 million was contributed to a Democratic Development Fund (Phase II) in **Guatemala** to help promote democracy and human rights. Support was provided to organizations involved in human rights issues, building a formal and participatory democracy or enhancing the identity and rights of the Mayan people. One component of the project contributed to the implementation of the Peace Accords.

- A total of $ 3.1 million was contributed to 2 projects in **Bosnia**, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Voluntary Fund and the Elections Canada Project, to support the 1996 national elections and related media activities.

Geographical Distribution

The percentage of CIDA disbursements by geographic region breaks down as follows:

Geographic Distribution of HR/DD
Disbursements - 1996/97

Americas and Caribbean 22.4%
Africa and Middle East 32.3%
Asia and Pacific 11.9%
Multilateral and Partnership Programmes 18.8%
Central and Eastern Europe 12.8%
Cross Regional 1.7%
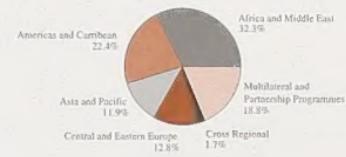
For more information about CIDA's HR/D activities, please refer to:

- *"CIDA's Support for Human Rights and Democratization 1996/97", prepared by the Political and Social Policies Division (YHR) of the Policy Branch;*

- *Government of Canada Policy for CIDA on Human Rights, Democratization and Good Governance (1995); and*

- *CIDA's web site: http:\\w3.acdi-cida.gc.ca*